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OTHER MATTERS

PLAN OF ACTION TO STRENGTHEN THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION ON THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

Note by the Secretary-General

1. The Convention on the Rights of the Child has achieved an unprecedented rate of ratification. As of December 1998, with 191 States parties, the Convention is the first legally binding international human rights instrument which is close to universal ratification. Only two States are not yet party to it.

2. By identifying problems, making recommendations and institutionalizing innovative methods of work, the Committee has succeeded since 1991 in generating a strong partnership for local, national, regional and international action to promote and protect the rights of the child. Nowadays the Committee on the Rights of the Child is a recognized catalyst of intellectual, financial and human resources for the improvement of the rights of the child in all countries.

3. As of December 1998, the Committee had received 131 initial and 20 periodic States parties' reports. It had reviewed 93 reports, leaving a backlog of over 50 reports resulting in a waiting list of more than two years. For some time already, the Committee has systematically searched for ways and means to decrease this backlog of work, but most solutions proposed in this regard could not be implemented owing to the extremely busy schedule of Committee members during the three annual sessions and pre-sessional working groups, which represent three months of meetings per year. The amendment to the Convention expanding the membership of the Committee to 18 experts has not yet entered into force.

4. Global success has generated an ever-increasing amount of work for all partners involved in the implementation and monitoring process, including for the Committee itself. One of the solutions suggested by the Committee in 1995 in order to improve its working capacity, both quantitatively and qualitatively, was to establish a support team with a view to preparing the discussions between Committee members and representatives of States parties and identifying potential areas for follow-up work, including technical cooperation. This idea led to the design and adoption of the High Commissioner's Plan of Action to strengthen the implementation of the Convention on the Rights of the Child. The Plan of Action, finalized in November 1996, became operational in July 1997. It is financed through voluntary contributions, with an estimated annual budget of US$ 1,391,821. Contributions received until 30 November 1998 totalled US$ 1,782,776.64.

5. In spite of delays experienced in the recruitment of staff (related to the requirement imposed by the General Assembly in its resolution 51/226 that all staff at the P2 and P3 levels be recruited among successful national competitive examination candidates), the activities of the Plan of Action support team during the period between July 1997 and November 1998 included:

(a) The provision of direct support to the Committee on the Rights of the Child for its September/October 1997, January 1998, May/June 1998 and September/October 1998 sessions and pre-sessional working groups through assistance, inter alia, in gathering and analysing available information, preparing comprehensive country analyses, drafting lists of issues and helping the Committee to identify major issues to be discussed;

(b) The follow-up to Committee recommendations, through the preparation of a survey of technical cooperation programmes of the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) relevant to the recommendations made by the Committee; and the preparation of a preliminary survey of existing technical cooperation activities relevant to the recommendations made by the Committee within various United Nations agencies and bodies. This survey is only the starting point of an overall effort to facilitate follow-up to the Committee's recommendations and participate in the design of OHCHR technical cooperation projects;

(c) Various other assignments, including background work for the drafting of general comments on the Convention, assisting Committee members and participating in outreach activities, such as training programmes, seminars and conferences, as well as United Nations and NGO meetings and briefings.

6. The Plan of Action seeks to increase the working capacity of the Committee on the Rights of the Child by providing in-depth identification of areas of concern and potential technical cooperation needs at the country level. It is envisaged that some of the specific activities to be undertaken under the Plan will be implemented in the future through the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS). A project document has been approved by the High Commissioner for this purpose.

7. A table indicating contributions received under the Plan of Action as of November 1998 is contained in the annex to the present document.

Annex

CONTRIBUTIONS RECEIVED UNDER THE PLAN OF ACTION
AS OF NOVEMBER 1998

Donor	Date received	Amount in US$
Australia	14 May 1996	23,940.00
Colombia	20 March 1998	30,000.00
	2 October 1998	29,000.00
Cyprus	30 July 1996	1,000.00
Denmark	6 June 1997	152,870.00
Finland	15 November 1996	66,904.55
Ghana	4 February 1997	10,000.00
Iceland	21 November 1996	7,120.00
I. Frankl	13 January 1998	553.53
Israel	19 July 1996	5,000.00
Italy	17 November 1995	62,566.37
Luxemburg	21 April 1997	15,804.60
Mauritius	14 May 1996	983.74
	1 July 1997	1,000.00
Norway	29 November 1996	319,725.04
	23 December 1997	275,057.76
	15 September 1998	259,479.69
Portugal	28 October 1997	10,000.00
Republic of Korea	5 July 1996	30,000.00
South Africa	7 April 1997	11,382.76
Sweden	3 January 1997	290,909.09
	31 August 1998	179,479.51
Total		1,782,776.64